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REVIEW OF THE UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	LEGISLATIVE AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	1 - 9	2
II.	REVISED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1998-2001 AND REVISED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999 ..	10 - 20	5
	A. Revised medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001	11	5
	B. Revised programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999	12	5
	C. Programme performance for the years 1997-1998	13 - 20	6
III.	PRELIMINARY LIST OF THEMES FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2000-2001 .	21 - 25	8
IV.	IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INFORMATION CLEARING HOUSE	26 - 40	10
V.	DATES OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE EXPERTS	41	15

Annexes

I.	Proposed revisions to subprogramme 8 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001	16
II.	Subprogramme 8: Public economics and public administration	20

I. LEGISLATIVE AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1. The main purpose of the Meeting of the Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance is to review the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance and to suggest new directives for future United Nations activities in this field. The mandate for the Group of Experts derives from the United Nations Economic and Social Council resolution 1199 (XLII) of 26 May 1967. Paragraph 7 of resolution 1199 (XLII) reads as follows, "Decides that the United Nations programme in public administration should from time to time be reviewed by a meeting of experts taking into account the public administration aspects of all programmes of the United Nations system, and that their report should be submitted for consideration to the Economic and Social Council".

2. Since the first call for direct United Nations involvement in improving public administration was made by the General Assembly in its resolution 246 (III) of 4 December 1948, the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance has evolved into a major, comprehensive and complex set of United Nations activities. There are three key aspects of the activities of the programme. The first is to review mandates reflected in General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions, indicating the evolving agenda for technical assistance and supportive research in public administration and development. The second is an elaboration of selected exemplary programmes of assistance. The third is to review the contributions of other organizations in the United Nations system concerned with public administration.

3. Pursuant to various legislative mandates, the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance has sought to meet the expressed needs of developing countries in improving their administrative and financial management systems for development. While the Programme grew steadily during the 1950s, the rate of growth greatly accelerated during the 1960s when focus shifted away from concern with maintenance-oriented administration towards greater emphasis on development administration. By the 1970s, Governments were increasingly concerned with building or strengthening national institutions devoted to the improvement of their administrative capability for economic and social development, and the Programme adopted a more interdisciplinary approach to handling administrative issues. During the 1980s, in a response to the external debt crisis and rising debt burdens and structural adjustment measures, the activities of the Programme focused on improving management techniques, public policy management and implementation of modern administrative processes.

4. The beginning of this decade brought with it dramatic global political and economic shifts, marked by increasing tendencies towards democratization, greater reliance on market forces, greater emphasis on mobilizing domestic resources and reducing fiscal deficits, increasing privatization, growing participation of non-governmental and community-based organizations in the development process, and heightened recognition of the need to assure environmentally sound and sustainable development. The Programme has responded to these new challenges with greater flexibility and enhanced assistance in areas like governance, decentralization, accountability, and enhanced public-private interaction. In the 1990s, the Programme has been active in the areas

of environmental and electoral administration, as well as in countries undergoing urgent crisis.

5. The growing importance of the role of the public sector in the development process was recognized by the Member States when they decided to resume the fiftieth session of the General Assembly in April 1996 to consider the question of public administration and development. The General Assembly reviewed at that time the report of the Twelfth Meeting of the Experts (A/50/525) as well as the report of the Secretary-General (A/50/847). The General Assembly at the conclusion of the resumed session adopted resolution 50/225 of 19 April 1996, which reinforces and enriches the mandates for the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance. In particular the General Assembly:

(a) Bore in mind the rapid pace and interdependence of global, political, social and economic development, and their implications for all countries, particularly the developing countries, and that there is a critical need for improved efficiency and effective public institutions, administrative procedures and sound financial management to harness these challenges in support of sustainable development in all countries;

(b) Recognized the role of the United Nations in assisting Governments, at their request, in ensuring the maintenance of essential basic government services and functions during times of crisis and in developing strategies for rebuilding a viable public administration in countries undergoing post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction;

(c) Took note of the fact that the United Nations system, responding to requests from interested Member States, has contributed in support of their public administration to include wider aspects of governance, including democratic, legal and judiciary reform, and strengthening of civil society;

(d) Emphasized the benefits to all countries of exchanging experiences and views in order to promote better understanding and applications of various international cooperation in this field, including such exchanges within the context of South-South and interregional cooperation;

(e) Invited Governments to strengthen their public administrative and financial management capacities through public-sector administrative and management reform, with emphasis on enhanced efficiency and productivity, accountability and responsiveness of the public institutions, and encouraged where appropriate, decentralization of public institutions and services (para. 9);

(f) Recognized the importance of the major United Nations conferences and urged the development of the necessary capabilities to enable public administration to implement the commitments agreed upon in an effective and coordinated manner (para. 10);

(g) Confirmed the importance of and calls for the enhancement of the effectiveness of the United Nations activities in the area of public administration and development (para. 13);

(h) Acknowledged that the role of the United Nations activities and programmes in public administration and development is to assist Governments, at their request, to improve their responsiveness to meet the basic needs of all, as well as to achieve sustainable development in all countries, the United Nations should focus its activities in the following areas as: strengthening government capacity for policy development, administrative restructuring, civil service reform, human resources development and public administration; improving performance in the public sector; financial management; public-private interaction; social development; developing infrastructure and protecting the environment; government legal capacity; post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction of government machinery; and management of development programmes;

(i) In this context, the United Nations should carry out these activities through pooling and facilitating access to information in public administration, promoting training and research in public administration and finance at all levels, advocacy and exchange of experiences, advisory services, technical assistance, capacity-building and human resources development (para. 13);

(j) Requested the United Nations to develop strategies, at the request of interested countries, for rebuilding a viable public administration in countries undergoing post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction (para. 14).

6. The Thirteenth Meeting of Experts was held at United Nations Headquarters from 27 May to 4 June 1997 (see E/1997/86). The Meeting explored current issues of governance, public administration and finance and reviewed the United Nations work programme in those areas in light of those new challenges and Assembly resolution 50/225. It made recommendations for action at both the national and international levels, consonant with that resolution. The overall theme of the Meeting was defined as "redesigning the State for socio-economic development and change". Within this overall theme, five specific issues were identified as particularly relevant: (a) promoting an enabling environment for sound governance; (b) enhancing the professionalism, ethical values and image of the public service; (c) re-thinking the State for socio-economic development; (d) creating an enabling environment for private sector development; and (e) strengthening governmental capacity in the mobilization, management and accountability of financial resources (E/1997/86, para. 4).

7. The Meeting recommended that, as a core component of the economic and social sector of the United Nations, the Programme should focus on promoting and monitoring the implementation of Assembly resolution 50/225, advancing global strategies and country-specific approaches that contribute to sound governance, institutional reinforcement and management development, as well as to the enhancement of ethical standards and professionalism in the public service. To these ends, the Programme should serve as hub and forum for the global exchange of information on policies, best practices and methods among Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental institutions and also provide advisory services to interested Governments.

8. In March 1997, the Secretary-General in the context of his programme for reform of the United Nations decided to merge the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, the Department for Economic and Social

Information and Policy Analysis and the Department for Development Support and Management Services into a single department, namely, the Department for Economic and Social Affairs. The purpose of the merger was that of integrating support for policy formulation, analytical and normative functions and relevant technical cooperation activities within the Secretariat. The new Department integrates the capacities for normative, analytical, statistical and technical cooperation activities with a view to maximize complementarity and synergy. As part of its normative activities, the Department will contribute to and facilitate international dialogue and debate on development cooperation with a view to building consensus in the economic and social spheres by providing substantive support to standing and ad hoc intergovernmental processes. The Programme will assist Member States in developing integrated and coordinated policy responses to development issues and to emerging global problems, negotiating global agreements on norms, standards and cooperative action and enhancing the effectiveness of operational activities for development.

9. The new Division for Public Economics and Public Administration has taken over the responsibility of the former Division for Governance, Public Administration and Finance in the implementation of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance. The functions of the new Division are described in document ST/SGB/1997/9.

II. REVISED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1998-2001 AND REVISED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999

10. The Fourteenth Meeting will consider the revised medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 (see annex I), and the programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (see annex II).

A. Revised medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001

11. The text of the medium-term plan was revised to take into account the reforms carried out by the Secretary-General, in particular, to integrate public economics issues with public administration and finance. The revised text of the medium-term plan will be reviewed by the General Assembly at its fifty-third session.

B. Revised programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999

12. The proposed activities of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance for the biennium 1998-1999 are included in the revised programme budget for the same biennium, which was approved by the Assembly at its fifty-second session (see A/52/303). These activities reflect the suggestions which emerged from the Thirteenth Meeting of the Group of Experts, as well as the reorganization carried out by the Secretary-General. These activities are summarized in annex II.

C. Programme performance for the years 1997-1998

13. Since the last report on the Programme's performance to the Thirteenth Meeting of the Group of Experts, the Programme continued to deliver on the remaining mandated outputs under the regular budget programme. At the end of the biennium 1996-1997, the Programme achieved total implementation of its programmed outputs. In addition, the Division responsible for the Programme was able to deliver additional outputs in terms of publications, information services and technical materials, as well as in international cooperation and inter-agency coordination and liaison activities. Since June 1997, the Division has provided substantive and technical services to the Thirteenth Meeting of the Group of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance and the Eighth Meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, and substantive services to the resumed fiftieth session of the Assembly. The performance during the period was further highlighted by quality improvements and efficiency in the delivery of its outputs through the use of information technology. Partnerships with other United Nations bodies, agencies and offices and non-governmental organizations were further strengthened during 1996-1997. Finally, the Programme was able to attain much higher global visibility and presence as it continued to expand its contribution and assistance to more developing countries, particularly countries with economics in transition.

14. In the 1996-1997 programme budget, the Programme had 31 mandated programme outputs in parliamentary services and published materials. The Division was able to deliver 30 outputs during the period. One output, a non-recurrent publication, was deferred as part of the overall United Nations efficiency measures contained in A/C.5/50/57/Add.1. Overall the Division produced 5 parliamentary documents, serviced 3 programmed parliamentary meetings, and produced 22 publications. This level of delivery was achieved despite of reduction in resources, the reorganization that took place in mid-1997 and other problems that were encountered by its former Department as a whole.

15. In addition to the delivery of programmed outputs, the Division also produced 11 additional publications based on initiatives taken by the Division but guided by Assembly resolution 50/225. During the biennium, various information and technical materials, such as 25 press releases and brochures and flyers, were also produced by the Division, particularly in conjunction with the holding of the resumed fiftieth session. Cooperation, coordination and liaison with numerous United Nations agencies and departments, non-governmental organizations and other organizations were initiated and strengthened during this period. Of particular importance are partnerships that have been concluded with the Arab Administrative Development Organization (ARADO), the American Society of Public Administration (ASPA), the Latin American Center for Administration and Development (CLAD), the Getulio Vargas Foundation, the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI), the University of Rome La Sapienza and the Latin American Parliament.

16. During the biennium, the Division strengthened its ties with other major organizations and institutions that are prominent and active in the area of public administration and finance. These partnerships afforded the Division greater exposure and presence at the national, regional and global levels while

maintaining the same level of resources. The effectiveness of its outputs and services were maximized as a result of these partnerships through more coordination and minimizing the duplication of similar activities. These partnerships further enhanced the visibility of the Organization in the area of public administration and finance.

17. Memoranda of understanding were signed between the Division and ARADO, ASPA, the University of Rome La Sapienza, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

18. Representatives of the Division also participated at meetings and conferences organized by or in association with the Eastern Regional Association on Public Administration, the Community of Portuguese Countries, the World Bank, INTOSAI, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), CLAD, the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS), ASPA, the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development (CAFRAD), the German Foundation for International Development (DSE), the Observatoire des Fonctions Publiques Africaines (OFPA), the Commonwealth Secretariat, the ILO Turin Centre and various regional bureaux of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

19. With the historic convening of the resumed fiftieth session of the Assembly and the major partnerships that have been initiated and strengthened during this period, the Programme was able to expand globally the awareness among Member States and particularly among the developing countries and countries with economies in transition the work of the Organization in this increasingly important issue in development. In resolution 50/225 the Assembly stated, inter alia, that the United Nations should focus its activities in the area of public administration and finance in the following areas: strengthening government capacity for policy development, administrative restructuring, civil service reform, human resources development and public administration training; improving performance in the public sector; financial management; public-private interaction; social development; developing infrastructure and protecting the environment; government legal capacity; post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction of government machinery; and management of development programmes. Through innovative partnerships with major actors in the field of public administration and finance, the Division was able to be involved in more activities at the regional and national levels. The Division also embarked on the implementation of the clearing house functions to establish its legitimacy of being the focal point in the United Nations system in public administration and finance.

20. With the use of available information technology, the Division was able to deliver better quality services and outputs to more and geographically wider users all around the world. The Division has established a dedicated website on the Programme in Public Administration and Finance, providing information on its work programme, availability of services provided and how to access these information and services. This website now also contains the publications that have been issued by the Division during the biennium. Other information materials have also been down loaded into this website.

III. PRELIMINARY LIST OF THEMES FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2000-2001

21. The proposed programme of work for the biennium 2000-2001 on public administration and finance will be submitted for approval to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly. As mandated by the Economic and Social Council, it is to be reviewed by the Meeting of Experts, which is expected to provide its views and recommendations to the Council. The proposed programme takes as its points of departure the major global conferences of the United Nations held in the present decade, and Assembly resolution 50/225. The Secretariat provides below a preliminary list of themes for the preparation of the proposed programme budget. The themes are divided into three thematic groups as follows:

1. Components relating to the social and political environment within which the State operates

22. These issues relate to the creation and the strengthening of certain key institutions that can safeguard the process of delivery of governance, promote the rule of law, increase the participation of the citizens in the running of the State and create an enabling environment for private sector growth. Under this group, the Programme will deal with elections, electoral structure and processes, parliaments and other representatives bodies, institutional machinery designed to facilitate citizen participation in the elaboration, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public policy, other related institutions giving civil society and effective presence and role, notably in conflict prevention, the management of diversity and consensus-building, justice systems, ombudsman institutions and other institutions set up for the defence and promotion of human rights, legal and regulatory frameworks establishing conditions of predictability, where business can operate productively and innovation grow, networks of institutions empowering civil society to advance human development in partnership with the State, and legal provisions and processes advancing and safeguarding transparency and accountability in public life.

2. Components relating to the role of the State and the processes of governance

23. The Thirteenth Meeting of Experts, which, consonant with provisions in the General Assembly resolution 50/225, adopted "re-designing the State for socio-economic development and change" as its overall theme, also emphasized the point that far from representing two adversarial forces, strong markets and strong States were truly complementary and necessary conditions for economic prosperity and social justice. The scope of State activity may be reduced since Governments no longer participate directly in the production of goods and services, as in the past. The mode of State intervention may have been changed as a result. However, it remains as important and, arguably, in some areas, qualitatively more critical than ever before. Not only in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, but really throughout the world, Governments are in the process of exploring the implications of this major transformation in the role of the State and of seeking to give shape to the structures and the processes that can make this role effective. The Programme

will gear its efforts closely to the task of assisting this process. It will focus, in particular, on the following themes:

- the new and evolving role of the State;
- interface of States and markets;
- modalities and purposes of State intervention;
- role of the State in privatization;
- role of the State in securing the provision of vital social services and promoting human development;
- role of the State in the establishment and maintenance of safety nets;
- role of the State in protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development;
- role of the State in promoting human rights; in advancing gender mainstreaming and in protecting minorities and vulnerable groups;
- role of the State in the elaboration and implementation of monetary and fiscal policies;
- role of the State in income distribution, the raising of revenue and management of financial resources in transparent and accountable ways.

3. Components which relates to the strengthening and reform of institutions, policies, methods of work and personnel of the public sector at large

24. Under this grouping, the United Nations will direct its attention to:

(a) The management of change: At times of rapid change the State must be in the forefront of implementing change and smoothing the path for progress. This entails proactive measures which develop enabling policy frameworks, promote new technologies, overhaul administrative structures and upgrade human skills;

(b) Administrative reform: In light of current trends, old bureaucratic structures no longer work effectively. Debureaucratization and decentralization must go in tandem with new approaches to management exemplifying openness, initiative, leadership, flexibility, diversity and responsiveness;

(c) Human resources development: Developing leadership qualities, facilitating change and fostering a new image for the public service call for new career structures which emphasize mobility, the importance of integrity and the overriding claims of merit in the recruitment, placement and promotion of public servants;

(d) Promoting new technologies and their effective use in government: Government must set the pace in the use of new technologies in the public service. Upgrading skills must go together with the introduction and proper maintenance of the appropriate tools;

(e) The thinking part of the State and government: Particular attention must be paid to the development and upgrading of those skills and tools, including databases, which condition the effectiveness of the totality of government and the many-faceted tasks of the State. The following stand out as areas of major importance: policy development; resource management; and last but not least, performance monitoring, measurement and evaluation;

(f) Public resource management including system of control and accountability;

(g) Improvement and innovations on service delivery.

25. According to the requests contained in paragraph 13 of the General Assembly resolution 50/225, the activities in the above-mentioned areas will be carried out along the following modalities:

- Advocacy, through interregional, regional and subregional conferences, symposia, etc.;
- Research, analytical work and publications on selected areas or topics;
- Basic data collection and analysis;
- Pooling and dissemination of information on national best practices, experiences and issues, through the United Nations information clearing house and otherwise;
- Training and capacity-building for government and civil society, in critical areas of need;
- Policy advisory services to Governments and civil society organizations, at the request of Governments;
- Technical cooperation.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INFORMATION CLEARING HOUSE

26. In his report on public administration and development (A/50/847-E/1996/7, para. 142) the Secretary-General recommended that "the United Nations programme, utilizing the latest technology, should become the clearing house for all materials on the subject, with a user-friendly interface for suppliers and users of information, linkages with relevant networks, and a strong service orientation to function as a catalyst for a network of international, regional and national institutions and organizations involved in these issues".

27. A report (ST/SG/AC.6/1997/L.10) on the main features of the clearing house for the Programme was presented at the Thirteenth Meeting of the Group of Experts (27 May-4 June 1997). The Division was asked to use information technology to support the Programme purpose of assisting Governments in improving public management and financial system by facilitating access to information, customizing and disseminating best practices, providing an international forum for exchange of experiences, providing advisory services and technical advice, creating an network and better coordination between United Nations agencies and other organizations and persons working in the Division's public administration, public finance and now public economic areas of governance.

Implementation of Internet website

28. Following the approval by the Group of Experts of the general orientation of the project, an Internet website serving the clearing house function mandated by the Secretary-General, is currently under construction. The Division will continue to fulfil a significant part of its mandated activities and outputs in traditional ways such as producing hard copy publications and studies and conducting face-to-face meetings, missions and negotiations. Nevertheless the Division will enhance productivity by offering Internet-based services as well. The table below gives a few examples of how use of the Internet differs from other methods of meeting the needs of Member States.

Methodology	Multidisciplinary/ multidimensional	Immediate	Expensive	Interactive	User controlled
Fax	No/no	Yes	Moderate	No	Yes
Publication	Yes/no	No	Moderate	No	No
Mission	No/Yes	No	High cost	Yes	No
Internet services	Yes/Yes	Yes	Initial cost - low; ongoing - low	Yes	Yes

29. The Internet will alter how the Division delivers services. For example, in the past efforts to provide assistance and advice through multidisciplinary missions resulted in very high costs and could be undertaken less frequently than needed. Through the use of electronic meetings, however, numerous advisors with cross-disciplinary skills can now be assembled at low cost and with little time delay. The Internet is a relatively inexpensive medium to use. Thus, much of the traditional United Nations development assistance - evaluation, advice, negotiation, sharing of ideas and documents, and fostering of South-South dialogue may in the future be undertaken quickly, interactively in real-time, and at low cost using the Internet. This was demonstrated by way of a highly successful Online Ad Hoc Meeting on Transparency and Accountability in Government Financial Management attended by government officials in Africa. In the future, the Internet will offer the United Nations new ways to deliver traditional services as well as opportunities to extend its service delivery capacity.

30. The clearing house website has been provisionally named the Public Administration Network (PAN). The site provides a service-oriented environment which encourages users' comments, suggestions, questions and feedback. The website features an area for online meetings and advisory consultations, resource links to sites and databases and a regularly updated news area. The Network site provides interactive pages that contain hyper-linked phrases and buttons. When users "click on" the hyper-linked material, they are taken to other pages and sites: often to sites maintained by non-United Nations organizations. The Division will evaluate and link to the best sites in the fields of public economics, public administration and finance providing an interactive roadmap to information and resources. The Network will also develop a network of persons and institutions interested in governance through providing a searchable directory. The Network site contains the following areas: about the PAN, technical advisors, online meetings, topic of the month, resources, directory and register.

31. On the "About the PAN" page, the user is introduced to the Network. A brief explanation is provided about the role of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in supporting conditions for sustainable development in economic and social fields. The site aims to serve users in developing and developed countries by maintaining an interactive online clearing house centre for information and discussion on public economics, public administration and finance issues at the national and local levels and the role of State relative to the private sector. The page contains a listing of the Division's areas of expertise. Each field is hyper-linked to a further section within the site that displays detailed information about the requested area of interest.

32. The second screen "Technical advisers" presents readily accessible information about Division advisers. The Division's greatest resource is contained in its technical advisers who collectively offer years of practical experience working in national governments and in field projects, preparing analytical and technical reports and organizing meetings and conferences in substantive areas. The site features a user-friendly interface linking the visitor to information about departmental staff members, including their curricula vitae, languages spoken and e-mail addresses. Visitors are encouraged to request information or assistance from one of the advisers and invited to visit the "Online Meetings" area to suggest a meeting on a topic of interest. A bulletin board is provided to users to post their questions.

33. On the "Resources" page, visitors will be able to select from the Global Information Gateway, United Nations resources, and multilingual resources. The Global Information Gateway will provide links to key resources in each substantive field of the Division's work. Links to critical resources and information in fields such as public economics, public administration, human resource management, electoral reform, conflict management, capacity-building, public financial management, auditing, private sector development, enterprise reform, and conversion of military facilities will be readily available on the site. Each field will be maintained by the divisional focal point for that substantive area and will feature links to key organizations, training information, documents, libraries, research papers, publications and where available, financial assistance information. Users are invited to correspond via e-mail with the PAN webmaster to help the Division continually improve the

relevance and usefulness of this section of the information clearing house. A search engine will facilitate rapid identification of available information.

34. Through the United Nations resource gateway, the Division's library of publications, newsletters, calendar of events and missions is accessible. Many of the Division's most recent publications are available as zip iiles and can already be downloaded by users. Since many of the visitors may be relatively new to the Internet, an online tutorial will be added to help users download and use zipped files. The United Nations resources page also gives site visitors convenient access to system-wide United Nations documents, the Integrated Meeting and Documentation Information System (IMDIS), and United Nations Member States and Permanent Missions to the United Nations.

35. The site features a multilingual resources page. The PAN cannot undertake to translate all formal documents and publications in all of the official United Nations languages. Nevertheless, the emerging field of multilingual communications and software development will increasingly complement the United Nations multilingual culture. Many publications, presentations and other information already exist in languages other than English and many of our technical advisers are multilingual. Multilingual resources will be integrated as they emerge and this information will be shared with the PAN community.

36. The most frequently updated area of the site will initially be the "Topic of the Month". This area will be used to feature a concise news piece on a current or recent activity of the Department. "Topic of the Month" demonstrates a commitment to providing updated information and insight on the site. It also points to a future highlight in which Governments and organizations will be invited to create their own web pages for posting and sharing governance activities and developments with the global community. Subsequent news items will showcase publications, best practices, forthcoming conferences and scheduled online meetings.

37. The PAN site presents major opportunities for collaboration and discussion. The Online Meeting centre offers opportunities to participate in scheduled events, to propose topics which users would like to see discussed and to post questions to a bulletin board which will be organized by the key areas of expertise within the Department. Preliminary mission evaluations can be made online and simple queries answered. Formal and informal meetings mandated by the Division's governing body can be conducted online in this area. Scheduled meetings and discussions can be held privately where the proceedings are password protected or may be designated beforehand as an open forum. Exchange of experiences and information about best practices can take place interactively and directly between experts and government officials or other participants. Through the Online Meeting centre, the Division can deliver value, faster responses to users, and interactivity at significant savings of time and cost. By developing expertise in discussing and analysing problems and negotiating documents online, the Division can progress smoothly to online training activities. The site will host an ongoing series of publicized interactive discussions and meetings.

38. The PAN site will offer a searchable directory on the website. Users can search for United Nations advisers and other members by criteria such as

language, field of interest, and/or country. The directory will contain basic contact details of persons interested in governance. As resources permit, the service may be expanded to offer further information such as a link to curricula vitae or personnel photos and even a contact management system permitting users to contact institutions or individuals via the Internet. Individuals and institutions may register cost-free as members of the Network and will have the opportunity to update or delete their own records. Members may specify whether they want to be included in the directory and in the e-mail lists to receive updates of news and forthcoming meetings.

39. Even with an active outreach program to encourage people to visit and revisit the PAN site through notification of regularly updated content, considerable effort will be needed to develop and sustain the interest and involvement of users in the PAN website. Nevertheless, continuous communication about the site and timely responsiveness to users comments, suggestions, and questions will enable the development of a truly valuable service to the global community interested in governance issues. Although online information sharing and online meetings present opportunities for productivity enhancements, the need for and benefits from face-to-face meetings and in-country evaluation and advisory missions will never be replaced.

40. The Public Administration Network site reflects the vision and commitment of the Division to focusing on the issue of creating appropriate and relevant content on the website. The site is content-oriented and uses limited, low bandwidth graphics. There are still very significant issues related to connectivity in many developing countries. As one of the key user groups of the PAN, government officials' access to the Internet will be encouraged and monitored. The Division can play a useful supportive role in at least three respects:

(a) Firstly, all divisional projects should aim to include a component that specifically addresses the need for information technology improvements of the country and government ministry concerned. Thus, the Division should mainstream information technology by including a computer workstation and Internet connection charges in each project and each project proposal or project document drafted by divisional advisers;

(b) The Division will maintain and update the list of Internet Service Providers in developing countries. In order to give government officials hands-on experience in participating in online meetings and other online activities, the Division will support access through direct short-term lease arrangements;

(c) The Division has submitted a proposal seeking allocation of a part of the "Development Dividend" created to establishing a connecting network of key subregional service centres to support greater Internet access throughout the developing world.

V. DATES OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING OF EXPERTS

41. It is recommended that the Fifteenth Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance meet in the first half of the year 2000 at a date to be determined in consultation with the Committee on Conferences.

Annex I

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO SUBPROGRAMME 8 OF THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1998-2001

Subprogramme 8: Public economics and public administration

The new subprogramme was established to ensure synergy in the delivery of programme activities under subprogramme 7.4, Global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, and 8.1, Public administration, finance and development of the Medium-Term Plan for the period 1998-2001. The overall purpose of the subprogramme is to assist the international community in its policy deliberations for developing and promoting global approaches to critical aspects and dimensions of public economics, public administration and public finance in the development process, with a view to integrating them effectively into national and international development strategies. This will be achieved by contributing to normative activities of the relevant intergovernmental and expert bodies, carrying out multisectoral analyses and providing policy advice and technical assistance to interested Governments, in particular those of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in the areas within the purview of the subprogramme.

The objectives of the subprogramme, which is implemented by the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration, are:

(a) To meet the needs of Member States for information and policy-oriented analysis on the role of the State and market mechanisms in national efforts to ensure economic stability, to foster economic growth and to increase efficiency and distributional equity, by providing them with analytical studies on the current patterns and trends in the fields of public revenue and public expenditure, as well as on the potential and shortcomings of market solutions to problems of allocation, distribution and regulation, in particular with regard to the provision of public goods and services, at the national and international levels;

(b) To respond to requests from Governments and intergovernmental bodies for information, methodologies, assessments and policy proposals regarding the linkages between political and economic issues and policies, and to prepare reports, as required, on the economic and social impact of United Nations-imposed sanctions, the imposition of coercive economic measures, the implications of the peace-development link and selected aspects of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction;

(c) To facilitate intergovernmental dialogue on available approaches, systems and methods in public administration and in particular, to serve as a clearing house for information and experiences in the field of public administration for development, by utilizing new and cost-effective technological approaches in the collection, maintenance and dissemination of information, in particular best practices, with a view to adaptation and replication in interested countries, as well as to identify new and emerging

issues and policies, thereby fostering South-South cooperation and contributing to African development;

(d) To assist Governments, at their request, in strengthening their capacity for policy development, administrative restructuring, civil service reform, human resources development and public administration training; improving performance in the public sector; increasing public/private sector interaction; improving the management of development programmes; and enhancing government legal capacity including the capacity to establish a regulatory framework for effective economic activities;

(e) To assist Governments, at their request, in developing the necessary capabilities to enable public administration to implement the commitments agreed upon at major United Nations conferences in an effective and coordinated manner, elaborating strategies, at the request of interested countries, for the reconstruction of a viable public administration in the countries that are undergoing rehabilitation and reconstruction once a conflict is over;

(f) To broaden Governments' resource mobilization and revenue administration capacities, enhance the efficiency and performance of tax administration and improve financial management skills in budgeting systems and techniques, accounting and auditing;

(g) To enhance national capacity for economic and social development, including the strengthening of relevant institutional, human resources, policy-analysis and policy-making infrastructure in developing countries and economies in transition;

(h) To promote and enhance the dissemination of public sector information systems including new techniques and modalities to improve the performance of public administration and the delivery of public services;

(i) To expand cooperation with relevant organizations and institutions inside and outside the United Nations system, including non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and the private sector, in the areas of the subprogramme's responsibilities.

Meetings of legislative bodies

13th Meeting of the Group of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance, 27 May-4 June 1997, New York (Consultations were made on the possible revisions to the MTP based on GA/RES/50/225)

8th Meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, 15-19 December 1997, Geneva (No consultations on the MTP)

14th Meeting of the Group of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance, 4-12 May 1998, New York (Consultations will be made on the revisions to the MTP)

New legislative mandates (1996-1997)

General Assembly resolutions

51/30 A	Economic assistance to States affected by the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
51/31	Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new and restored democracies
51/175	Integration of the economies in transition into the world economy
51/178	First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty
51/208	Implementation of the provision of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions
51/240	Agenda for Development
51/242	Supplement to an Agenda for Peace (Annex II)
52/18	Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new and restored democracies
52/38 D	Relationship between disarmament and development
52/162	Implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions
52/169 H	Economic assistance to States affected by the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
52/181	Unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries
52/193	First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty
52/196	Developing human resources for development
52/203	Operational activities for development of the United Nations
52/205	Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries
52/209	Business and development

Economic and Social Council resolutions

1996/42	Progress on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120

1997/59 Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: follow-up to policy recommendations of the General Assembly

Annex II*

SUBPROGRAMME 8: PUBLIC ECONOMICS AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

7A.47 The subprogramme will be implemented by the Division for Public Economics and Public Administration. The subprogramme will ensure synergy in the delivery of programme activities under subprogrammes 7.4, Global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, and 8.1, Public administration, finance and development, of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001. The overall purpose of the subprogramme will be to assist the international community in its policy deliberations for developing and promoting global approaches to critical aspects and dimensions of public economics and public administration in the development process, with a view to integrating them effectively into national and international development strategies. This will be achieved by contributing to normative activities of the relevant intergovernmental and expert bodies, carrying out multisectoral analyses and providing policy advice to interested Governments, in particular those of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in the areas within the purview of the subprogramme.

7A.48 The subprogramme will focus on meeting the needs of Member States for information and policy-oriented analysis on the role of the State and of market mechanisms in national efforts to foster economic growth and to increase efficiency and distributional equity. Activities will include analytical studies on the potential and shortcomings of market solutions in relation to problems of allocation, distribution and regulation, in particular with regard to the provision of public goods and services, at the national and international levels. Attention will also be paid to research on and analysis of public expenditure patterns and trends; privatization, deregulation and competition policies; the interaction between the public sector and technological innovation; and public policies regarding enterprise and private sector development.

7A.49 The subprogramme will provide assistance to Governments of developing countries and countries with economies in transition on key issues and emerging trends in public administration for development, in order to facilitate, through the exchange of knowledge and experience, their efforts to improve the efficiency of public institutions and administrative procedures. Activities will focus on strengthening government capacity, at the central and local levels, for policy development, administrative restructuring, civil service reform and institutional and human resource development; improving performance in the public sector; and introducing efficient and accountable managerial systems, structures and information technologies in

* Extract from the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 (A/52/303).

accordance with national development objectives. Emphasis will be also placed on developing and promoting a participatory approach to policy-making.

7A.50 The impact of advisory and technical cooperation work will be enhanced through the subprogramme's function as a clearing house for information and experiences in the field of public administration for development. The Division will utilize new and cost-effective technological approaches in the collection, maintenance and dissemination of information on public economics and public administration, in particular best practices, with a view to adaptation and replication in interested countries. Substantive documentation and support will be provided to the Meeting of Experts on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance, which provides policy guidance to the subprogramme in this area.

7A.51 Another important set of activities of the subprogramme relate to the support, within the context of national needs and priorities, to Governments' efforts to introduce and promote rational management of tax systems and financial administration. Particular attention will be paid to activities related to strengthening national capacities for resource mobilization and revenue administration; enhancing the efficiency and performance of tax administration; and improving financial management skills in budgeting systems and techniques, accounting and auditing. In that regard, substantive and technical support will continue to be provided to the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters.

7A.52 The subprogramme will also respond to requests from Governments and intergovernmental bodies for information, methodologies, assessments and policy proposals regarding the linkages between political and economic issues and policies. The Division will prepare reports for submission to the General Assembly and the Security Council, as required, on the economic and social impact of United Nations-imposed sanctions, the imposition of coercive economic measures, the implications of the peace-development link and selected aspects of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction. Cooperation with relevant organizations and institutions inside and outside the United Nations system, including non-governmental organizations, will be expanded.

7A.53 The proposed staffing requirements for this subprogramme consist of 1 D-2, 3 D-1, 5 P-5, 13 P-4/3, 5 P-2/1 and 25 General Service posts, following the consolidation of the Division for Governance, Public Administration and Finance of the Department for Development Support and Management Services and the Microeconomic and Social Analysis Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, and the transfer of 4 Professional posts from the latter to the Division for Social Policy and Development.

C. Programme support

7A.54 The activities under programme support comprise information services and administrative services.

7A.55 Under the guidance of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General, the Information Support Unit provides and uses information technology in order to support: (a) the needs of staff of the Department for electronic information services to facilitate both research and dissemination of documents; (b) participation of Member States, non-governmental organizations, civil society and other actors in the intergovernmental processes serviced by the Department; (c) the central policy and coordination role of the Department in the economic and social activities of the United Nations system, in particular through the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs; and (d) the Under-Secretary-General in discharging his functions as Programme Manager.

7A.56 During the biennium the Unit will focus on electronic information services, including: (a) coordinating, integrating and providing information technology services in the Department, as required; and serving as a resource and advisory unit on information activities; (b) global electronic dissemination of parliamentary information on behalf of the Department's substantive units; (c) making operational the Integrated Meeting and Documentation Information System (IMDIS), including integration with other departmental on-line resources, in support of the coordination and planning function of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs; (d) facilitating participation of Member States in intergovernmental processes and monitoring of results; and (e) participating in the development of information technology standards, policies and guidelines at the organizational and inter-agency levels, including representing the Department on the Information Technology Coordinating Committee of the Secretariat and its working groups, the working groups of the Information Systems Coordination Committee of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, and the Joint United Nations/Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Committees on the Macrothesaurus.

7A.57 The Unit will serve as the focal point for the coordination of the departmental publications programme, including representation of the Department on the Working Committee of the Publications Board, advising substantive divisions on United Nations publications policies, coordinating the promotion of the publications of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and assisting divisions in outreach activities.

7A.58 The electronic information services, systems and databases mentioned above are proposed pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/1 and in the light of the Secretary-General's proposals for the expansion and innovation in the application of information technology to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization (see A/51/950,

strategy 7). While the Department of Management is responsible for putting in place the infrastructure for information access, substantive departments such as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs have responsibility for providing that infrastructure with information and using it for strategic purposes.

7A.59 The consolidated Executive Office will provide personnel, finance, resource planning and general administrative services to the organizational units of the Department.

7A.60 The proposed staffing requirements for programme support consist of: (a) the Information Support Unit, with one D-1, one P-5, two P-4/3, one P-2 and five General Service posts; and (b) the Executive Office, with one D-1 (through the reclassification of a P-5 post), two P-5, three P-4/3 and eight General Service posts. The combination of the executive offices of the current three departments would yield an overall reduction of 4 Professional and 23 General Service posts.